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Tips for Planning and Implementing Inclusive Programs

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Tips for Planning and Implementing Inclusive Programs

Sheridan Centre for Elder Research

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Building Connected Communities:
**Tips for Planning and
Implementing Inclusive
Programs**



To access this resource and
the Toolkit visit:
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Planning



Develop A Participant Profile

It is important to understand the “target group” for your program. Look through the Census data sheets in the toolkit to learn more about the demographic profiles of different groups in your community.

Having this information can help you to make modifications to your program and/or delivery methods.

Example:

- If language barriers exist, include staff members that speak the same language, have print materials translated and/or use an interpreter.
- If transportation barriers exist, consider developing a car-pooling system or providing bus tickets and maps and/or holding the program in a central area for your target group.

Explore Programming Needs In Your Community

Find out what types of programs and supports are already available in your community for your target group. Use the interactive pdf maps in this toolkit for an overview of community programs and supports, categorized into mainstream, ethno-specific, multicultural and faith group organizations.

With this information there are two main avenues you can explore:

1. Develop a program that is clearly lacking (i.e. do something innovative/new).
2. Develop a program that provides more support for a big need in the community (i.e. provide more of what we know is needed and works, don’t “reinvent the wheel”).

When planning you can ask the following questions:

- Currently, where would our identified target group go for support in the community?
- Is there a clear gap in service provision that our program can fill?
- Can we connect with other organizations doing similar things to explore partnerships?

Involve Older Adults From Your Target Group In The Planning Of The Program

Consulting with your target group may be the best way to find out what their concerns or barriers are, what types of programs appeal to them and what they need to improve their quality of life. Engaging in this way can also help you develop a program that is culturally appropriate.

Tips for engaging your target group in consultation:

- Recruit some older adults as board members to increase the likelihood that your large-scale policies and programs will reflect their values and needs
- Recruit older adults for a program planning committee to increase the likelihood that your program is culturally appropriate and age-friendly, with minimized barriers to participation
- Involve older adults as peer-leaders. Train and support them to act as ambassadors for your program, connectors who can reach out to new participants and system navigators who can support their peers.

Consider Where And How Your Program Will Be Delivered

Are you providing your program onsite at your organization or out in the community? Consider accessibility not just of the physical space but also how accessible it is by different forms of transit. Consult the interactive pdf maps in the Toolkit to see the demographic spread of older adults in your community. This can help you to figure out where to house your program to make it accessible to the greatest number of older adults.

When planning where and how your program will be delivered you can ask the following questions:

- Where are most of the individuals in your target group living?
- Can they get to the location of the program?
- Is the space accessible?
- Can you provide in-home services to accommodate older adults who are isolated?
- Can you provide telephone services to accommodate older adults who are isolated?
- Will there be a cost for the program? Can it be flexible for those who are lower income?
- In what language will the program be promoted and delivered? Do you need translators/interpreters?
- Will you involve volunteers from appropriate cultural and linguistic communities? What training do they need?

Implementation

Utilize A Variety Of Outreach Methods

How will you tell the community about your program and recruit participants? Remember, if you are trying to target individuals who are isolated and/or lonely, they are by definition difficult to reach. Consider utilizing a variety of outreach methods and give yourself plenty of time to recruit participants for the program.

Tips for outreach:

- Ensure promotional material is age-friendly. Use everyday language, easy-to read font and positive images of older adults. Have older adults review the material before it goes out.
- Ensure promotional material is culturally appropriate, including language and images. Have the information translated and reviewed.
- Promote your program in local newspapers, including ethno-specific ones if appropriate.
- Post flyers in local libraries, community centres, senior centres, public community boards, and high schools.
- Explore the possibility of sharing information about your program with the local faith groups.
- Explore the possibility of sharing information with and through informal clubs, groups and associations in your community. Some of these organizations will be captured in the interactive pdfs in the Toolkit.
- Post information online. Consider free postings in community events forums, on other organizations websites or social media.
- Ask local businesses like pharmacies, grocery stores or restaurants if you can leave some flyers in a visible location.
- Explore the possibility of promoting your program through a local doctor's office or health clinic.

- “Spread the word” organically through your current clients/members. Ask them to tell their friends/families about the program and provide them with flyers to distribute.
- If you have a waiting list for other programs or services, consider inviting the individuals on that waiting list to your current program.
- Network with local ethno-specific, multicultural and mainstream organizations to see if they can help spread the word about your program or refer participants they think might be interested. Be willing to reciprocate.

Remove Or Minimize As Many Barriers As You Can

Barriers to participating in your program can vary. They can be the same risk factors that are contributing to an individual's isolation and/or loneliness. Often, the best place to start in addressing barriers is to find out more information about what they are. Consider a short “intake interview” with participants to find out more about them. Get creative in addressing barriers: utilize other community services/resources, make accommodations, provide training to staff and adjust your program delivery plans. These are just some of the things you can do.



Barrier	Suggested Action Plan
Language Barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask staff/volunteers who speak the language to interpret or facilitate the program. • Have all documents translated. • Prepare a list of local interpretation/translation services to use in the future. • Utilize technology if appropriate. • Provide staff with a phonetic dictionary, pictograms, translation cards and basic phrases in other languages.
Cultural Difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit qualified staff or volunteers of various backgrounds from the local community so participants feel more connected to their own culture. • Consider creating a cultural advisory committee with the goal to help staff appreciate cultural differences. • Consider cultural competency training for staff. Use provided cultural competence video for training purposes ▶ https://source.sheridancollege.ca/centres_elder_building_connected_communities/ • When in doubt, ask participants about their values, likes/dislikes and accommodate what you can.
Transportation Barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the transportation systems and options in your community, have resources available to share • Find volunteers who can help participants navigate the public transit system • Be aware of seniors discounts for public transportation and how to obtain it • If transportation is a barrier for many participants, consider a different location for your program • Consider providing bus tickets and/or maps for those in need • Arrange a car-pool system among participants (either using their own cars or taxi services)
Participant Is Unable or Unwilling to Leave Their Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider home visits with a qualified staff or volunteer. Adapt the programming to bring it to the participant. • Arrange for the participant to “phone in” for the program. This can be done using a simple speak phone function or a more sophisticated conferencing program. • If appropriate use a videoconferencing platform like Skype or Zoom. • Find out more information about the particular reasons a participant is unable or unwilling to leave their home and see if you can accommodate by arranging transportation, modifying programming to accommodate health needs or modifying the physical space to make it more accessible.
Financial Barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider providing a free program. • If there must be a fee consider a sliding scale for those in need. • Consider a community fundraising event to help cover the fees of those who cannot pay.

A Sample of Community Resources in Peel and Halton Regions

Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211ontario.ca for social, health and government services in your community.
Call 3-1-1 for information about city services (including transit).

Peel

Multicultural Organizations:

Brampton Multicultural Community Centre
150 Central Park Dr. #107,
905-790-8482

Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre
3650 Dixie Rd. Suite 103,
905-629-1873

Malton Neighbourhood Services
3540 Morning Star Dr.,
905-677-6270

Language Services:

Peel Multicultural Council
6630 Turner Valley Rd.
905-819-1144 ext 221

Ethno-specific Services:

Peel Senior Link
50 Burnhamthorpe Rd W. #300
905-712-4413

Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care
5510 Mavis Rd.
416-412-4571

Indus Community Services
3038 Hurontario St. #206
905-275-2369

Halton

Multicultural Organizations:

Community Development Halton
3350 South Service Rd.
905-632-1975

Carousel of Nations Multicultural Association
587 Fourth Line
905-257-0581

HMC Connections - Oakville Office
1092 Speers Rd
905-842-2486

HMC Connections – North Oakville Office
380 Dundas St E,
905-842-2486 ext 271

HMC Connections - Burlington Office
760 Brant St Unit 7,
905-842-2486 ext 291

HMC Connections - Milton Office
55 Ontario St S,
905-842-2486 ext 281

Language Services:

Centre for Skills Development
3350 South Service Rd,
905-333-3499

Centre for Education and Training
90 Burnhamthorpe Rd W,
905-949-0049

Ethno-specific Services:

Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton
2302 Bridge Rd.
905-815-6184

Milton Chinese Association
330 Bronte Rd. #203
905-876-2916

Muslim Seniors Circle
424 Freman Cres.
905-849-0806

Redleaf Cultural Integration
1996 Itabashi Way
905-516-9016

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Note

This tool was developed by the Centre for Elder Research, Oakville ON, Canada from 2015-19. It is part a 4-year research project called Building Connected Communities: Improving Community Supports to Reduce Loneliness and Social Isolation in Immigrants 65+. This project was focused specifically on the experiences of older immigrants in the Regions of Peel and Halton. This tool is not a standardized or validated treatment for loneliness and it is also not a substitute for mental health advice. The inclusion of any agency or service in this tool does not constitute an endorsement of the service.

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